



Montana Main Street A Case Study Promotion

Western Heritage Days Stevensville, Montana



Colleen Meyer (left),
Director, Historic St.
Mary's Mission

A collaborative effort between the Stevensville Main Street Association and Historic St. Mary's Mission made Western Heritage Days 2006 a resounding success.

The weekend event kicked off with the opening of the Western Heritage Days Art Show. Artists from as far away as Devil's Lake, North Dakota, came to display their work. The show had a wonderful mix of Native American Art, Western Art, Three-Dimensional Art, Photography and various Pottery Arts, providing a very successful art show. Friday night, the public had the opportunity to attend the artist reception and quick draw/ auction. Artists started with a blank screen and had one hour to create a piece of art, frame it and auction it off to the attendees. The art pieces were incredible and the artist's performances were wonderful crowd pleasers. Everyone enjoyed the show of talent! The Art Show continued into Saturday making it a 2-day event.

Saturday, June 17th, began with the Western Heritage Day Parade. Entries representing the History of Stevensville, vintage tractors and autos, teams of horses and wagons, cowboys, cowgirls and the Nine Mile Northern Region Pack Train of the USDA Forest Service provided a fantastic parade.

The Promotion Committee of the Stevensville Main Street Association conducted Historic Home Tours by providing free wagon rides on a horse drawn trolley with a narrative of the historic homes and buildings on and near Main Street. The trolley made trips every 30-40 minutes with approximately 90 tour participants.

The Historic St. Mary's Mission grounds hosted vendors (made in Montana products), living history demonstrations, Historic Mission Tours, old time music, clog dancers, a wonderful BBQ serving over 500, a vintage car display and Cow Pie Bingo. The Mission grounds provided a beautiful setting and the events were within walking distance of downtown. Living History Demonstrations literally brought history alive for participants who experienced churning butter, making rope, tin can ice cream, weaving demonstrations and branding. Many volunteers worked together to educate the public on skills that were used in day to day living of the ancestors that preceded us.

Cow Pie Bingo was a fun event that raised funds for both the Historic St. Mary's Mission and the Stevensville Main Street Association. "Suzy" the cow performed well leaving one lucky winner very happy.

The celebration also commemorated the 165th anniversary of the founding of Stevensville, Montana, "Where Montana Began," established in 1841! An incredibly successful event, participants look forward to the future and keeping history alive. Attendance was estimated at more than 2,000.

To contact the Stevensville Main Street Association, call 406-777-3773.

For information regarding the Montana Main Street Program, call 406-841-2756.